

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

EUR-12 /076 W

----- 119352

R 091130Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8121

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0222

ABIDJAN ALSO PASS DATT

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, AO, DM

SUBJ: BENIN'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FOR ANGOLA TO REMAIN HOME

UNTIL MPLA CALLS FOR IT

REF A - COTONOU 194, B - COTONOU 155,

1. INTERVIEWED UPON HIS RETURN FEB 6 FROM ONE-WEEK VISIT TO LUANDA FOR PRO-MPLA SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE, BENIN'S MIN OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ORIENTATON, LT MARTIN AZONHIHO (COMMUNIST) SAID AUGUSTINO NETO THANKED BENIN FOR ITS OFFER OF "VOLUNTEERS." HOWEVER, NETO DID NOT BELIEVE THAT, IN VIEW OF THE EXCELLENT MILITARY SITUATION IN ANGOLA, THE BENINESE FORCE WAS NEEDED NOW. HE ASKED THAT IT BE KEPT IN READINESS IN THE UNEXPECTED EVENT IT WAS NEEDED IN FUTURE.

2. AZONHIHO'S REMARKS WERE ECHOED NEXT DAY BY PRES KEREKOU IN SPEECH AT PARAKOU. PRESIDENT ADDED THAT VOLUNTEERS FOR ANGOLA WOULD RECEIVE MILITARY TRAINING ANYWAY.

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3. COMMENT: AS WE SUSPECTED FROM THE BEGINNING (SEE REF A), THE IDEA OF A FORCE MAY HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN BENIN FOR LOCAL PARTY PROPAGANDA PURPOSES HDND TO ASSIT SOVIET/MPLA PRESSURES IN ANTI-MPLA AFRICAN COUNTRIES, WITH NETO NOW PLAYING HIS PART IN THE GAME, ALTERNATIVELY, NETO'S SOVIET ADVISORS MAY HAVE CAUSED HIM TO TURN DOWN THE OFFER ON BASIS SOVIETS FELT EXPENSE AND POSSIBLE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF ARMING AND TRANSPORTING TO ANGOLA BUNCH OF RAG-TAG STREET BUMS OUTWEIGHED THE ADVANTAGES. THERE IS ALSO THE THESIS, ES-POUSED BY THE GHANAIA CHARGE, THAT THE REAL PURPOSE OF BENIN'S CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR ANGOLA WAS TO BUILD UP BENINESE ARMY'S STRENGTH IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES WITH TOGO.

4. ALTHOUGH BENIN GOVT HAS STAGED RECRUITMENT RALLIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND HAS SUPPORTED ITS RECRUITMENT EFFORT WITH ITS PROPAGANDA MACHINE, POPULAR REACTION REPORTEDLY REMAINS DIVIDED. APPARENTLY MANY CANNOT GRASP WHAT BENIN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE IN ANGOLA. END COMMENT.
ENGLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLICIES, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COTONO00222
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760048-1103
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760269/aaaacikv.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 COTONOU 194, 76 COTONOU 155
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BENIN'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FOR ANGOLA TO REMAIN HOME UNTIL MPLA CALLS FOR IT
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, AO, DM, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006